

YELLOWSTONE RIVER CONSERVATION DISTRICT COUNCIL

CONSERVATION DISTRICT MEMBERS: Carbon, Custer, Dawson, Park, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Treasure, Yellowstone, McKenzie County North Dakota, RAC Chairman

Meeting Minutes -- September 21, 2006

MSU-Billings College of Business – Room 163

Members Present: Paul Gilbert, Sweet Grass CD; Tony Barone, Richland CD; Don Youngbauer, Rosebud CD; Phil Fox, Treasure CD; Bob Hector, Yellowstone CD; Dave Schwarz, Prairie CD; Will Alexander, Carbon CD; Walter Rolf, Custer CD; Luther Waterland, Carter CD; John Moorhouse, RAC Chairman and Orvin Finsaas, McKenzie ND, CD.

Others Present: Warren Kellogg, NRCS/TAC; Jim Robinson, DNRC; Burt Williams, TNC/RAC; George Jordan, USFWP; Mike Penfold, YRF; Robert Lubbers, YRF; Dale Vermillion, RAC; Gay Easton, Yellowstone CD; Laurie Zeller, DNRC; Arthur Gehmert, RAC; Kelly Gilbertson, Project Assistant, and Carol Watts, Custer CD Administrator.

Chairman Paul Gilbert called the meeting to order at 10:07 pm on Thursday, September 21, 2006. Introductions were made.

TAC update: Notes from the Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC) September 21, 2006 are attached. Warren thanked Gay Easton, Bob Hector, Burt Williams, and Dave Schwarz for participating in the TAC meeting.

Warren yielded the floor to Jim Robinson who stated the TAC had approved Work Order #2 be brought to the Council. This work order is for channel migration zone mapping which consists of two components, inundation mapping and channel migration mapping. This mapping will be the foundation for the geomorphology scope of work for the cumulative effects analysis as well as provide floodplain information to local jurisdictions for land planning purposes. Approval for Work Order #2 was granted by the Council by consensus vote. This work order amounts to \$28,570.00 that falls under the \$75,000.00 GIS contract.

Warren reported that Susan Gilbertz is in the process of drafting her cultural inventory summaries. Park County was added to her studies. The interviews with Park County will be taking place in October. Funding will come through the COE. Amy Miller and Darryl Stutterheim will be working with her to select names of people to interview. Warren said the work Susan Gilbertz has done far exceeds his original expectations.

A new contract with NRIS will be presented for approval at the next Council meeting. NRIS has been formatting and posting YRCDC information and data as it becomes available. The new contract will be for \$2,500.00 for a two year period.

Warren drew a sketch on the board as an example of the riparian work he has started in Sweet Grass County. Tony Barone is the Council member contact for this scope of work. This work will wrap up for the season and will begin again in earnest next summer. Warren stressed that it was very important that Council and RAC members make the initial contacts with selected landowners. Landowners will be sent photography of their places following the visit. Paul Gilbert elaborated on the importance on contacting the landowners as a non-government entity before the work is started and doing follow up with them afterwards. He also advised using the term VMP (Volunteer Management Practices) instead of BMP (Best Management Practices). Input from landowners will be important in understanding how different management approaches affect riparian areas.

George Jordan gave a PowerPoint report on the various fish passage diversions that USFWS is involved with in Montana and Wyoming throughout the Yellowstone River Basin. See the TAC notes for more information.

Grant applications: Jim Robinson said that a grant application was submitted to the EPA in August to develop an ortho photo viewer. This tool would provide access through the internet to the various aerial photo sets for easy comparison. The aerial photo sets are currently available on the Yellowstone web site. Ralph Rosa of the COE has written a letter of support for this grant application. The amount of the grant is for \$75,000.00.

Dave Schwarz reported that the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has a weed grant request for proposal for non-profit entities. The Council agreed that it would be a good idea to look into it further and give the information to the county weed boards.

A proposal was sent to Dave Schwarz from Liz Galli-Noble for an EPA targeted watershed grant. The deadline is November 15, 2007. Dave Schwarz said that the YRCDC should proceed with caution. More information is needed to find out what the split of dollars will be and who the sponsor and administrator of the grant will be before making a decision to be part of it. The Council agreed that this was the approach to take.

Dave reported that the Buffalo Rapids Project was awarded an NRCS research grant to compare irrigated land under EQIP water conservation programs with areas without those programs. The information will be used to form best management practices for the Yellowstone River.

Dave Schwarz noted that Vickie Marquis wanted to have a meeting with the Missouri River Council and the YRCDC in Great Falls Wednesday, November 8, 2006 from 9-11 in the morning. There should be 4 or 5 Council members available to go. This is prior to the MACD convention.

The EPA-RGI grant final report is due December 30, 2006.

The funding effort is still in a negotiating process between the House and Senate.

The 2006 annual report was approved. Kelly Gilbertson will make the final corrections. The Council commended Dave Schwarz for a job well done.

Yellowstone River Center: This could be a public outreach center for the Council that would provide public relations support and information/education regarding the Yellowstone River Basin. When the Council has completed the CES this center could be a place to store the information that we have compiled to keep it organized and centrally located. It is recommended that a committee be formed to take a look at this concept and write a mission statement. It could be as simple as adopting the Council's mission statement. Burt Williams, Bob Hector, Dave Schwarz, and Don Youngbauer will serve on this committee.

Coordinator Report: A meeting of the Coordinator Search Committee was held by tele-conference on August 31, 006. It was decided to proceed with advertising but the committee stressed that it was important to proceed slowly and to be sure that the right applicant would be hired. The committee wants someone who is dedicated and will stay the course. The applications are sent to Kelly Gilbertson who forwards them to John Moorhouse and Walter Rolf. It was suggested that the applications be sent to all the committee members instead. Dave Schwarz wanted it to be on the record that he was opposed to hiring a Coordinator until the Council is fully funded. Paul Gilbert suggested that more discussion was needed by the committee. Paul commented that the coordinator position was doing well with Dave Schwarz serving as interim coordinator.

Public relations were also discussed at the Coordinator Search Committee meeting, Don Youngbauer stated that he thought help was available and the Council should follow through on it.

Business meeting: Elections were held. Will Alexander nominated Don Youngbauer to be Chairman and Bob Hector to be Vice Chairman. Dave Schwarz moved that nominations cease and unanimous votes be cast. Tony seconded and the motion passed by voice vote. Don Youngbauer commented that he would need help. He does not have previous experience with being Chairman but he is impressed with the Council and what they are doing and is willing to serve as Chairman. The standing rules state that the elections are to be held in July and the re-organization meeting be held in January. Paul Gilbert will stay on as co-chairman until the end of the year. The Council thanked Paul Gilbert for serving as Chairman this past year.

Treasurer's report was given by Carol Watts. The financial statement shows all the activity in the account since the last meeting and the grant statement shows where we are with the grants. The grant statement needs a correction in the formula for the 2006 - 2007 pass through grant. The reports were approved with the correction noted and filed for audit. Carol requested that vouchers be turned in after the meeting and any one who was on tele-conference calls needs to add that stipend also.

Minutes of the August 18, 2006 teleconference were reviewed. The minutes were approved as written by consensus vote. The minutes from the coordinator's search committee meeting were also reviewed and approved.

Paul Gilbert asked if the YRCDC display board would be set up at the MACD convention. Luther Waterland said he would look into it. It was decided that there will be no YRCDC meeting at the convention. Kelly Gilbertson will see if the display can be set up at the Billings Airport.

Warren said he was not expecting to hold a TAC meeting in October. The TAC will likely meet again in November. If there is a YRCDC meeting in October it may just be a tele-conference.

Public Comment: There was no public comment. The meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

**Yellowstone River Technical Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes
Billings, MT - 9/20/2006**

Yellowstone Basin Fish Passage

George Jordan gave a PowerPoint presentation on the status of current and pending fish passage projects that USFWS is tracking in the basin:

- Tongue River: T&Y Dam, S-H Dam, and Mobley/Sitting Man Dam
- Clear Creek (Carbon Co.)
- Shields River: Brackett Creek Diversion
- Yellowstone River: Intake Dam, Cartersville Diversion
- Bitter Creek (Wyoming): Sidon
- Clear Creek (Wyoming): Kendrick Dam
- Shoshone River (Wyoming): Mormon Dam
- Pryor Creek

George was asked to give this same presentation to the YRCDC.

Wetland/Riparian Mapping Pilot Study

Greg Kudray (Montana Natural Heritage Program) gave a presentation to the TAC on the pilot study he recently completed. Following his presentation, Greg was asked to define what he sees as the extent of the wetland mapping to meet the intent of the cumulative effects work with an estimated budget.

Riparian Scope

Warren Kellogg reviewed the latest draft of the field methodology for the riparian work. NRCS has completed 5 sites in Sweet Grass County to field test the methodology and have been making revisions. They have also been sharing this methodology with the avian folks to be sure the riparian effort is closely coordinated with the avian data they have been collecting.

Geomorphology Scope

- Jim Robinson went over his proposal for Work Order #2 (GIS open contract with DTM). This work order will develop the GIS-based inundation model (estimated 100 year floodplain). The TAC recommended that the optional task of modeling the 2-year and 10 year events for the Lidar counties not be forwarded to the Council at this time. The Work Order budget would be approximately \$28,500. using the Council's 2005 RDG grant. The USGS (John Kilpatrick) offered to provide technical review on the hydrology elements of this model. This recommendation will be taken to the Council.
- Jim Robinson discussed the need to revisit the flow line digitizing that was completed under Work Order #1. The variability in flow conditions between the different sets of aerial photography made the original digitizing difficult. Revising flowline datasets would allow better comparisons between the 1950, 1976, 1995, and 2001 channel configurations. This work would cost approximately \$10,000. After discussion, the TAC requested more information on the need and utility of these flowline datasets to further the full geomorphology scope before a recommendation is made to the Council.
- Jim wrote memo outlining the differences between two approaches in collecting digital elevation data (LiDAR and RADAR) for the remaining counties. Collecting the necessary high resolution orthophotography would also be part of this effort. The costs for the RADAR mapping are not yet nailed down so it was decided that we will revisit this at a later TAC meeting. If funding becomes available, April 2007 would be the targeted timeline for having a contractor selected so they could begin work.

Information/GIS Scope

The NRIS contract has expired. Will need to extend the contract and make it an open-ended contract without any dedicated funds at this time. The main task that NRIS has been doing for the Council is formatting and posting reports and aerial photography associated with the cumulative effects study. Jim will work with Laurie Zeller on contract language.

310 Permit Web-Based Project

Tony Thatcher (DTM Consulting) gave a demonstration on the 310 permit web-based application. Kelly Gilbertson has inputted most of Yellowstone County's 310 permits which has been forwarded on to DTM. The project is near completion, just waiting on additional information that needs to be inputted by the Yellowstone CD office. The contract with DTM has expired so it will need to be extended in order to finish the project. Laurie has offered to help with the extension.

Socioeconomic – Cultural Values Interviews

Susan Gilbertz gave a brief up-date. Her team will be scheduling interviews in Park County for early October. The TAC provided Susan some additional names of potential interviewees.

EPA Targeted Watershed Grant Program

Dave Schwarz reviewed correspondence he has had with Liz Galli-Noble regarding the EPA grant announcement. The MSU Water Center is considering applying and would like the YRCDC and other basin watersheds to be included. The TAC recommended some potential projects to include in this grant if the Council decides to become involved. There was some discussion on keeping the grant administration (if funded) based in the Yellowstone Basin instead of at MSU - Bozeman.